

Rain by EmeraldTulip

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/M, Gen, One Shot, Post-Season 2, Pre-Relationship, Prompt Fic, Tumblr Prompt, implications of abuse, more "lucas and max talk about things", yep that's from billy but that's fine I'm imagining he's dead

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Karen Wheeler, Lucas Sinclair, Max (Stranger Things), Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

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Summary:

After they leave from a successful D&D campaign at Mike's, Max cries in front of Lucas for the first time. To her surprise, he knows what to do.

Rain

Author's Note:

so i don't know why all my lumax stories have one-word titles so far, but whatever. i like them. anyway, this is another prompt from my tumblr! (follow me)

@lucassinclairstan: @he-lives-on-mirkwood Another Lumax (I ship them a lot!) A oneshot where Max cries in front of Lucas for the first time and he comforts her

you ask, i deliver. post-season 2, i like to imagine billy is dead but max is still living with her dad. also, she has glasses because... there's no reason i just like the idea.

enjoy, everyone!

“Bye, kids!” Mrs. Wheeler calls from inside as the kids pile out the door. “Get home safe!”

“Night, Mrs. Wheeler!” Dustin calls back as he picks up his bike. He glances at his watch. “Shit. I have to be home... five minutes ago.” He’s pedaling onto the street in an instant, seemingly ignoring the pouring rain. “See you tomorrow, guys!”

Will, hovering in the doorway, laughs a little. To Max, it sounds like normal, but she knows by the way Mike eyes him that something’s different. Not that she would recognize it—for the boys, there’s a clear definition of the time periods BUD and AUD, Will before the Upside-Down and Will after it. But for her, the Will she knows is capital-a After, and always will be. And as much as she enjoys hanging out with her new companions, she’s never going to get to know Will Byers Before, and she’ll never really be able to understand.

“It’s getting late,” Mike says, eyes fixed on the shorter boy. “Will, you want to go back inside?” Jonathan had come to pick up him and El with his car several hours before, and though El was exhausted (she

always is, these days) and went without a fight, Will insisted on staying and finishing the campaign. Mrs. Byers—Joyce, she'd insisted after a few months of Max dropping by the store—had called to give Will the okay to stay at the Wheeler's instead of going home himself. They aren't repeating the Worst Mistake of 1983.

Will nods, offering Max and Lucas a small smile. "Movies tomorrow at noon, right?"

"Yup," Lucas replied, flipping the kickstand of his bike up. "Don't forget, we have to meet before we go so we can buy snacks to sneak in."

"Michael!" Mrs. Wheeler calls again from inside. "It's getting late, and we don't want you or Will getting sick, and your friends have to get home before anyone worries!"

"Coming!" Mike screeches. He turns back to face them. "Alright, where do you want to meet? We could have lunch at the diner—I'll call Dustin on the supercom—if that's cool with you guys. And—"

He's cut off by Nancy, who is walking toward the stairs but stops with a grin when she spots them. "Hey," she says before glancing down at Mike. "You should get inside, it's pretty cold."

"You sound like Mom, oh my God," Mike complains before grabbing Will's wrist. "Let's go. goodnight, guys." He pushes past Nancy, dragging Will inside. Will manages one final wave before he's being pulled upstairs and out of sight.

Nancy rolls her eyes fondly, smiling after her brother. "You guys heading out?" she asks, leaning against the doorframe.

"Yeah," Max replies, glancing at Lucas. "We really should get doing, though. Oh, and tell Mike that his plan is fine." She grabs her skateboard from where it's been leaning against a post. "Bye, Nancy."

"Bye," Nancy replies as Max and Lucas walk out into the rain. Max feels her eyes on them for a moment as they walk out onto the sidewalk before the lights turn off and they hear the door click shut.

Neither of them were prepared for the weather, so Max is armed only

with her skateboard and a hooded jacket. Better than Lucas, who only has his hoodie and bike. Then again, Lucas only has to walk a little way down the cul-de-sac.

Your friends have to get home before anyone worries.

Mrs. Wheeler's voice pops into her head, unprompted, except Max does know exactly why this is happening.

Please, not now. Because if she can hold out for five minutes, it'll be okay, but she can already feel her eyes burning and Lucas is still right next to her. For once, she's glad it's raining, because maybe that'll hide the tears welling up in her eyes.

Before anyone worries.

Sure, she laughs bitterly to herself. *Like they're gonna worry.*

"This is me," Lucas says, coming to a stop and startling her out of her reverie.

"Oh," she says. Her voice sounds strained. *Sound normal, sound normal...* "Okay. See you tomorrow." She's turning away, already congratulating herself on fooling him, when he grabs her arm. On reflex, she jerks away, turning around to face him as she pulls her arm tightly to her chest.

"Max," he says quietly, pausing for so long she thinks she might have just imagined it in the soft patter of the downpour. Then he says it again. "*Max.*"

"What?" she grumbles, trying to make herself bored instead of unreasonably upset. *Maybe the rain will hide it. Please let the rain hide it.*

"Will you look at me?" he asks, and it really is a suggestion instead of an order.

Just because he's not making her do anything, she listens to him, meeting his gaze. "What is it?"

He grins humorlessly. "I should be asking you that."

"I don't know what you mean," she says flatly, turning away. "Look, Lucas, I have to get home." *Before anyone worries.*

"I'm not going to ask you if you're okay," he tells her, and that stops her in her tracks because back in San Diego she never had friends and if someone cared they'd just ask *are you okay are you okay are you okay* until the words became background noise instead of genuine concern. "Because I know you don't want to answer that. I just want to know what's wrong—and don't lie to me, because something is wrong. And friends don't lie." And now she knows that he really is serious, because he's pulling Eleven's lines right now. *Friends don't lie.*

And that's when she breaks completely, because he's used the word *friend* and he's used it to describe *her*. Her sobs are quiet from years of practice, but she feels hot tears streaking down her face and mingling with the rain. *Dammit*, a little piece of her still completely aware says. She's never cried in front of him before—there was a close call, once, when she thought that they were all going to die, with Dustin screaming into his supercom as the bus they were hiding in shook. But she didn't cry then and she most definitely is now. *You blew it, Mayfield.*

She doesn't know exactly how it all happens, but she finds herself sitting on the stairs leading to the Sinclair's front door, Lucas beside her—not quite touching her but definitely still within her personal space, their shoulders a mere inch apart. She doesn't push him away, and she isn't sure whether it's because she's too tired or if she doesn't mind.

She struggles to catch her breath, not ready talk, and instead focuses on breathing *in and out, in and out*. Lucas fills the silence.

"I'm sorry," he says quietly. "I don't know if this was my fault, but even if it wasn't, I'm sorry."

She shakes her head, tears making her contact lenses uncomfortable. She pops them out expertly, not caring when they fall to the ground and are washed by the water down the drain. She has more at home. "It wasn't you," she finally says. "You're actually the good part. I just... I don't know. It's stupid."

“Something that makes you upset isn’t stupid,” Lucas replies, and though she can’t see more than a blurry outline of him, she knows his eyes are on her.

She sighs, pulling her glasses from her pocket. She doesn’t put them on, just holds them up closer to her eyes and studies them as rain splatters against the lenses. “I... I guess, when Mrs. Wheeler said that people would worry if we didn’t get home safe... I wish I had people like that.” *I wish my family cared.*

She stares down at her glasses, a few more tears escaping, not daring to glance up at Lucas, so she’s a little startled when hands reach forward and tug the spectacles from her hands. She hears the faint *click-click* of them unfolding, and then they’re being slid into position on her face. The world, though a little water-spotted, clears, and Lucas has his gaze fixed on her.

“You do,” he says, and she frowns.

“What are you talking about?” she asks, because she’s not really following.

He rolls his eyes. “You have people who care about you. I care about you. Dustin and Mike and Will and El care about you. Steve, too. We would worry if you didn’t make it home safe.” He sighs. “And I know that... you know, everything that happened with Billy... wasn’t great.”

“No shit,” she mutters, and she feels him shake once with the force of his snort beside her.

“Yeah, he was a piece of work. But, you know... he sucked. And I’m sorry you had to go through with that. And I know your dad...”

“He’s trying his best,” she finishes, using her pinky to push her glasses up her nose. “But it’s hard. And we go over to Mike’s house and his mother is so nice and his sister is a thousand—no a *million*—times better than my brother ever was. It just reminds me, every time, that my dad would probably only care about a week after I didn’t come home, then he would go collect some insurance bullshit, and that would be that. I haven’t heard from Mom in months. And

Billy would have been the one to kill me. They wouldn't care."

Lucas scrubs a hand over his face. "But, Max, you don't have to worry about Billy anymore. And your dad, yeah, it's hard, but give it time. And just... remember, if you ever need to get out of there, you can stay at my place. I'm sure Mike and Dustin wouldn't mind, either."

She breathes in, out. "Thanks, Lucas."

"I'd offer you a tissue or something, but I don't think it would do anything in this weather," Lucas says, slight smile gracing his face.

She manages a laugh. "No, I don't think so." She stands, grabbing her skateboard. "I should get going. I'll see you tomorrow at the diner, right?"

"Yeah," he agrees, pushing himself up, too. "See you tomorrow, Max."

She walks down the street without looking back, and through the pounding of the rain she hears the door shut with a *click*. She pushes her glasses up her nose once more before tossing her board down to the ground and pushing off, gliding under streetlight after streetlight as she heads home.

Author's Note:

hope you liked it, everyone! comments and kudos are, as always, appreciated.

find me on tumblr, my main is [@fivehargreeves](#) and my writing blog is [@lowriting](#)!